



# MedWet

L'initiative pour les zones humides méditerranéennes  
The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative  
مبادرة المناطق الرطبة المتوسطية

## The MedWet Communications Strategy 2016 – 2020

### I - Introduction

1. Since the establishment of the MedWet Secretariat in France in 2014, communications have been **a key focus for its work** in order to position MedWet as a **credible player** in the region and beyond to strengthen the understanding of the roles and values of wetlands conservation and restoration.
2. After the positive results of the MedWet presence at the Ramsar COP12 in Uruguay and at the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris, the Initiative has gained in visibility and is being perceived as an inspiring organisation working for wetlands in the Mediterranean region.
3. In line with the Framework for Action 2016-2030, approved by the MedWet/Com 12, the adoption and implementation of the MedWet's Communication Strategy should strengthen further MedWet's ability to deliver on its mission.
4. The Strategy offers a powerful road map to bring the relevant messages across the various priority targets. The settings and implementation of the strategy should bring changes in term of organisation for the Secretariat team and budget allocations for communications.

### II – MedWet overall fundamentals

5. At a turning point of its development, it was important to revisit MedWet fundamentals and adapt them according to the new Ramsar Strategic Plan while ensuring alignment with its goals.

6. **Positioning**

*“What is MedWet? What is its unique selling proposition? How does it carry out its mission?”*  
MedWet encourages and supports governments to adopt policies and implement actions on the ground in favour of the conservation and the sustainable use of Mediterranean wetlands. To do this MedWet creates synergies with a wide range of intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

7. **Vision**

*“Why is MedWet here?”*  
Mediterranean wetlands' resources and functions are conserved in the long term, and restored when necessary, for the benefit of nature, nations and people.

## 8. **Mission**

“What does MedWet do?”

The MedWet Mission is to ensure and support the effective conservation of the functions and values of Mediterranean wetlands and the sustainable use of their resources and services.

## 9. **Primary Goal**

To contribute to the achievement of key targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)\* 2016-2030 in the Mediterranean region through the effective implementation of the strategic plans of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

*\*Most relevant SDGs for MedWet are 6, 13, 14 and 15.*

## 10. **Operational Goals 2016-2020**

In order to reach this primary goal, MedWet pursue the following **four operational goals**, in line with the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024:

1. Addressing the drivers of Mediterranean wetlands loss and degradation;
2. Contributing effectively to the conservation and management of Mediterranean Ramsar Sites;
3. Encouraging the wise use of all Mediterranean wetlands; and
4. Enhancing the implementation of the Ramsar Convention across the Mediterranean region.

## 11. **Descriptor**

MedWet is a **regional intergovernmental network operating within the framework of the Ramsar Convention and involving also other key actors**, dedicated to promote and support multi-stakeholders policies and actions on the ground **for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of Mediterranean wetlands**.

## 12. **Values**

1. Respect for the diversity of nature and cultures
2. Science-based action
3. Solidarity through mutual support and respect
4. Priority given to participatory approaches
5. Integrity, efficient use of resources and seeking replicable, long term solutions
6. Promoting human well-being and security\* and respect of essential human rights  
(\* security = livelihoods for French translation in particular)

13. **Slogan**

*Wetlands for a sustainable Mediterranean region.*

### III - MedWet key communications elements

14. A SWOT analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (see Appendix I)<sup>1</sup> coupled with a detailed audiences analysis, while ensuring consistency with both the latest Ramsar Secretariat Communications Strategy and the Communications, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) strategy approved at Ramsar COP 12 in Uruguay, has enabled to define the following key elements of the MedWet Communications Strategy for 2016-2020.

15. **Overall goal of MedWet Communications**  
**Influencing and assisting Mediterranean governments and other stakeholders to work in favour of wetlands conservation and sustainable use.**

16. **Communication objectives**

Four communications objectives have been defined to deliver on the overall communications goal:

- a) **Raise MedWet profile** as a trusty and valuable source of information and support on wetlands conservation and sustainable use (*aligned with operational goal 1*);
- b) **Ensure the right mix of information being delivered** to further raise the awareness about a) wetlands values and functions; and b) existing policies and tools for the conservation, restoration and effective management of these ecosystems (*aligned with operational goals 1 to 3*);
  - c) wetlands ecosystems services for nature and people;
  - d) wetlands contribution to the relevant SDGs; and
  - e) wetland cultural values, including traditional management systems;
- c) Highlight the **positive actions by the Med community** of governments and non-governmental actors in favour of wetlands (*aligned with operational goals 1 to 4*); and
- d) Provide communication support to help **raise communication capacity** (*aligned with operational goal 4*).

17. **Targeted Audiences**

Six main target audiences have been identified to deliver on the overall communications goal:

- I) Government decision makers in key sectors impacting wetlands:
  - a) The « Ramsar family » : Ramsar/MedWet administrative authorities/focal points; CEPA and STRP focal points; national Ramsar/wetlands committees; and
  - b) Ministries (foreign affairs, agriculture, environment, housing, transport, water, tourism); environment commissions in National Parliaments; National Biodiversity Committees; regional authorities (especially in countries with decentralized governance (e.g. Spain); local authorities with Ramsar Sites under their remit;

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<sup>1</sup> This has been inspired by the Ramsar SWOT.

- 2) Wetland managers:
  - a) River basins bodies;
  - b) Protected areas managers/bodies; and
  - c) Ramsar sites managers.
- 3) The donors community: bilaterals, multilaterals, private sector, individual donors;
- 4) Regional intergovernmental institutions;
- 5) Regional NGOs and International NGOs active in the Med; and
- 6) The media.

## 18. **Communication principles**

When practically developing communications tools and activities, it will be important to ensure:

- a) The **link** between wetlands and **SDGs** (6, 13, 14, 15);
- b) The ability to **challenge** by promoting best practices on wetlands (laws, management...): encouraging but also ready to be critical when necessary;
- c) A **scientific** approach (facts and figures);
- d) **Positive**/inspiring messages (avoid doom and gloom and negative messages);
- e) Taking into account **cultural and political sensitivities**;
- f) Always promoting **solidarity and cooperation**; and
- g) The use of different languages: at least Arabic, English and French.

## 19. **Key dates & events**

The rich calendar of events and dates offers a large variety of communication opportunities. However it will be **key to prioritize them to strategically rhythm** MedWet communications given its resources (both financial and human), while ensuring to strike the right balance between the geographical scope (international, regional, national) and the effective presence. This will depend on the scope of the selected events. Three options could be foreseen: a) high presence level at key conferences/events; b) light presence at specific conferences/events; and c) virtual presence (web and social network to ensure a minimum MedWet share of voice.

## 20. **Key Communications activities/tools**

Beyond the “usual” communications tools (website, corporate brochure, ppt presentations, fact sheets based on Ramsar’s whenever possible but adapted to MedWet audiences...), it is planned to work on the following key projects:

### 20.1 **MedWet Agora**

Based on its success at Ramsar COP 12, the Agora concept will be replicated whenever possible, with two options full version (similar to COPI2) or light version (if less resources available) depending on the selected events.

- a) The Agora concept: a place of knowledge and exchange, promoting cooperation and recognizing the rich variety of cultures, but also a place to discuss, to relax and share good moments, in the best Mediterranean style!; a place close to the COP to organise a stand, speaking slots for MedWet partners, side events program, an exhibition, and a med style networking area; and
- b) Communication tools and activities: video, exhibition of posters with postcards, a publication presenting the analysis of the national report at Mediterranean level, side events in the Med, welcoming the Med Ramsar awards...

## 20.2 **MedWet Ambassadors Programme**

- a) Targeted at well-known either with scientific credentials, or with political stature or artistic recognition;
- b) Their task: help opening doors for MedWet branding and Mediterranean Wetlands visibility;
- c) Activities: opening doors when meeting governments and donors, representing MedWet in some meetings/conferences, joining MW coordinator in Med Tour; and
- d) Communications tools: videos, testimonials, pictures...

## 20.3 **MedWet “state of the art” tool**

- a) Objective: comparing each country status against key criteria for Med wetlands, peer-pressure by the best in class, leverage for the others:
- b) Frequency: yearly publication around World Water Day;
- c) Possible criteria: evaluation of each country against: number of Ramsar Sites, number of Superleague sites, existence of a specific wetlands national legislation, management plans per Ramsar Sites, achievements against SDG's goals (6, 13, 14, 15), achievements against Aichi Targets related to water/wetlands), indicators of the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO), criteria against MedWet culture (to be defined); and
- d) Communication tools: the report, tri annual press release, web version, videos/photos...

## 20.4 **MedWet contribution to specific Wetlands coalition for specific international events**

Based on the UNFCCC COP21 success last December in Paris (in partnership with the France-IUCN Partnership), the aim of such coalitions is to promote the value and the voice of wetlands in a coordinated manner with key partners at key international events. The idea will be to ensure a visible presence of MedWet together with strategic speaking slots at key side events.

## IV - MedWet key communications tools & activities per objectives

21. Based on a detailed audience's analysis, the following tools and activities for each of the four communication objectives have been identified:

Communications Goals	Tools	Activities
<p>1. <b>Raise MedWet profile as a trusty and valuable source of information and support on wetlands conservation and sustainable use</b> (aligned with operational goal 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MW corporate brochure with yearly factsheets (annual reports)</li> <li>• MW corporate Power Point presentation to be adapted when necessary</li> <li>• MW contact database (names, emails, social media accounts, meetings attendance list,...) including the MW friends (check with la TdV)</li> <li>• MW press database (international, regional national)</li> <li>• A generic press pack about MW (see corporate brochure)</li> <li>• Press releases (with quotes...) related to MedWet/Ramsar news: MW tri annual state of the art, world water day, COP Ramsar, adapting relevant Ramsar press releases with Med hook, joint press releases within coalition or alliances (wetland platform, COP21, MWO...), reacting/promoting national news related to wetlands</li> <li>• Photo database of a minimum of copyrights free images (with a selection for national coverage)</li> <li>• MW site upgrade with Arabic pages</li> <li>• Social media messages and content (including pictures, graphs...)</li> <li>• MWO tools</li> <li>• MW tools in Arabic</li> <li>• Framework for action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning MW photo expo "our wetlands, our people" tour</li> <li>• MedTour by MW staff (12 countries per year) to meet focal points, local donors representatives, French &amp; key countries ambassadors</li> <li>• Visit to Med countries Ambassadors in Paris</li> <li>• Social media plan: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn</li> <li>• Website update/upscale</li> <li>• Meeting with Ramsar Coms to define and agree MW contribution to their coms tools and how MW can regionally adapt them; plus explore funding opportunities for regional tools and activities (Danone/WWD)</li> <li>• Yearly plan for WWD &gt; supporting Ramsar and adapting funding permitted</li> <li>• Press work around World Water Day (more appropriate for Med countries)</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Developing a pitch for funding the Agora at next COP (UAE contacts)</li> <li>• Presence at key events (see Agora concept) attended by at least some of them</li> <li>• Invitation to MW COM VIP events</li> <li>• Tour du Valat VIP events (tbc. with wetlands Platform concept)</li> </ul>

	brochure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media coverage on the relevant topics</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Ensure the right mix of information being delivered to further raise the awareness about a) wetlands values and functions; and b) existing policies and tools for the conservation, restoration and effective management of these ecosystems:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wetlands ecosystems services for nature and people;</li> <li>wetlands contribution to the relevant SDGs; and</li> <li>wetland cultural values, including traditional management systems</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Med state of the art tool (define possible indicators related to Ramsar Sites, national strategies, delivering on SDGs, cultural values )</li> <li>• MW Cartoon – 2<sup>nd</sup> season (other services)</li> <li>• MedWet stories/case studies/briefings <u>coupled with videos</u> making specifically the link with all relevant sectors Wetlands &amp; agriculture, wetlands &amp; tourism, wetlands &amp; foreign affairs, wetlands&amp; culture... by involving actors from the respective sectors and promoting their testimonials recognizing values</li> <li>• Stories with pictures: successful case studies with facts and figures, showing the contribution to the SDGs and link with Water use, development/community (also in light of immigration crisis)</li> <li>• Summaries of important wetland books</li> <li>• List of sectorial conferences with dates in the calendar</li> <li>• Infography explaining wetlands functions and services</li> <li>• Short videos to illustrate the topics/news (see Ramsar videos &amp; Med angle)</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co organizing Ramsar Webinars (ensure Med angle if possible)</li> <li>• Joint coalition with partners at IUCN World Park congress</li> <li>• Teaming up with MedPAN for synergies on specific topics/trainings</li> </ul>
<b>3. Highlight the positive actions by the Med community of governments and non-governmental actors in favour of wetlands</b> <i>(aligned with operational goals 1 to 4)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of available newsletters (to identify where and to contribute with MW information)</li> <li>• Newsletter (either its own if capacity, or at least MW contribution to some key others- Ramsar, TdV; or a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a real Communication network with National Focal Point and NGOs related to CEPA activities, so as to ensure nice stories and visibility of the Med</li> <li>• MW Prize to be celebrated</li> </ul>

	<p>new one for the Wetlands platform)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure visibility to med stories coming from the field in various MW tools (see above)</li> </ul>	<p>at MW COM meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• celebrate the best/good examples Ramsar sites rangers on international Rangers day, the 31<sup>st</sup> of July</li> <li>• Speaking slots/presentations at national Rangers annual conferences</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Provide communications support to help raise communication capacity</b> (<i>aligned with operational goal 4</i>).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “MedWet tour” tool kit: USB with all relevant MW materials and brochures</li> <li>• Ramsar documents to be adapted to the Med context or with med highlights</li> <li>• Adapting MW expo and tools for local context when relevant</li> <li>• Communication training kit (jointly developed with Ramsar or other regional partners)</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizing pre MedWet/Com webinars (in Arabic as well)</li> <li>• COP presence (replicate the Agora experience depending on COP opportunities/feasibility and possible link with other regional initiatives)</li> <li>• Coms training modules (MOOC)</li> <li>• Media training for MW staff, focal points or partners</li> <li>• Jointly organizing press trips with partners in the run up of important events (COP Ramsar,..)</li> <li>• Producing documentaries on national news (new Ramsar Site) together with national stakeholders</li> <li>• Building local stakeholders coms capacity for media activities (training...)</li> </ul>

22. It is obvious that the implementation of these activities will require considerable human and financial resources, beyond the existing ones at present. The list of activities is presented here as an indication of what should/could be done. The Secretariat will use this list as a guidance to prioritize its actions in 2016 and 2017, while seeking additional resources to do more.



## **Appendix I – MedWet communications SWOT**

### **Strengths**

*New Visual identity defined*

*New Framework for action – broader scope...*

*Brains – dedicated and skilled staff, level of experience/expertise of the coordinator*

*Extensive network – 26 Parties + MED NGOs + Med research centres network*

*Single issue focus – key, universal issue, flexible approach*

*Engagement – passionate members and governments directly involved*

*Sound organisation – clear structure, good governance*

*Rapid decision making process – small structure, agile, able to react and adapt*

*Communication experience during international events - COP12 and COP 21*

### **Weaknesses**

*No media outreach to date – no media database*

*Limited budget and capacity – small Secretariat with a very small team, many tasks, broad plan, no communications strategy to date*

*Lack of visibility – little public recognition, no clear message*

*Commitment – changing government representatives, “soft” decision-making, guidelines not always followed by implementation*

### **Opportunities**

*Large list of events and dates*

*Med network of actors*

*Expanding Social media outreach in the Med*

*Organization changes - new team, clarified strategy; clear differentiation*

*Increased visibility - prioritized target groups, outcomes, messages*

*Water issues gaining importance - potential for SDGs goals, influence*

*Improved implementation – engage senior level & decision making level in governments*

*Increased partnership activity – stronger links to other organizations and sectors, coalition of actors*

*Fundraising opportunities - Private sector and international funds*

*SDGs adoption*

### **Threats**

*Negative global trends – overall wetlands loss, increasing population and water use*

*Lack of wetlands awareness – benefits not widely known or valued*

*Waning of political will – dropping in priority list, Parties indifferent*

*Med political and social context*

*Other organizations – biodiversity and water conservation space is crowded*